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**BULLETIN
OF THE
CENTER FOR
CHILDREN'S
BOOKS**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH ANNOTATIONS

- * Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
- R Recommended.
- Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
- M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
- NR Not recommended.
- SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
- SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for age of child.

* * *

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Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO • GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

Volume 33

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Number 9

New Titles for Children and Young People

Adler, David A. *The Children of Chelm*; illus. by Arthur Friedman. Hebrew Publishing Company, 1980. 79-20617. Hardcover ed. ISBN 0-88482-722-0; Paper ed. ISBN 0-88482-773-9. 32p. Hardcover ed. \$5.95; Paper ed. \$1.95.

M
K-3 Three stories about the fools of Chelm are illustrated with harsh drawings that contain a great deal of hatching; in each story children play a minor role, since it's the adults who are foolish. In one, they decide to give the children, who dislike bathing in the river, their entire year's quota of weekly baths at the same time; in another story, the men plod through the snow to carry children home from school so that there won't be footprints in the snow; in the third tale, the foolish men—when told it would have been easier to roll stones down the mountain than carry them—carefully carry the stones back up so that they can roll them down. There's an intrinsic humor in all Chelm stories, but the pedestrian style of writing doesn't accent humor here, nor does it have the shaped cadence of the style that makes Isaac Singer's *The Fools of Chelm and Their History* so enjoyable a book.

Ahlberg, Janet. *The Little Worm Book*; written and illus. by Janet and Allan Ahlberg. Viking, 1980. 79-22289. ISBN 0-670-43438-8. 32p. \$2.95.

Ad
K-3 A small book with tidy, sprightly little drawings has the sort of humor that should appeal to young children, but it really consists of play on a single idea: worms are creatures that can be pets, food, trained performers, etc. There's a history of the worm, a section on health hazards (delusions like thinking it's a pencil; sore throat; tail-biting, prevented by the "Little Wonder" worm collar) and points to look for when buying worms as pets. Not substantial, but there's a giggle on almost every page.

Allen, Linda. *Lionel and the Spy Next Door*; illus. by Margot Apple. Morrow, 1980. 79-23275. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-22225-0; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-32225-5. 94p. Trade ed. \$6.95; Library ed. \$6.67 net.

M
2-4 Convinced that the man who's just moved in next door is a spy, Lionel began following him and even prowled through his house; he'd been very friendly with the former owner (an elderly woman) and knew where she'd kept the key. The man proves to be quite innocent, but the big surprise is that he finds, going through his elderly aunt's papers, that *she* had been a spy for many years. This slight plot is filled in with discussions among Lionel, his sister, and his grandfather about what career Lionel will follow and—rather tediously—with Grandpa talking about his hobby, motorcycling. The writing style is adequate, the characters superficially drawn.

Anno, Mitsumasa, illus. *Anno's Italy*. Collins, 1980. 79-17649. Trade ed. ISBN 0-529-05559-7; Library ed. ISBN 0-529-05560-0. 48p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.91 net.

R As he did in *Anno's Journey*, the author begins with paintings of the countryside,
All moves from village to town, and from town to city. There is no text; none is neces-
sary, for the pictures tell the story, and the profusion of exquisite details of landscape
Ages and architecture are story enough. The composition and perspective are impressive,
* and there are bits of quirky humor hidden here and there. For those who have visited
some of the Italian cities pictured, the roofs of Siennese brown or the canals or
cathedrals will provide the pleasure of recognition, and the pages take the viewer
back again to the open countryside and—eventually—the calm blue sea. Young
children may not appreciate the significance of every detail, but they can appreciate
the beauty.

Barber, Richard. *A Companion to World Mythology*; illus. by Pauline Baynes. Delacorte,
1980. 79-16843. ISBN 0-440-00750-X. 312p. \$14.95.

R Like Uden's *Dictionary of Chivalry*, this is in alphabetical arrangement, the text
5- printed in inner columns and the broad outer margins most beautifully illustrated by
* Baynes in color and in black and white. The pictures have no captions, and the one
weakness of the book is that one cannot always tell what drawing matches what
entry, but the entries are full enough to satisfy the reader's needs; they give enough
information to enable users to pursue other sources. The intent of the book is the
identification of the gods of the major myths of the world, and it is by their names that
the text is arranged. Some entries are quite brief, just a few lines, but many give an
abbreviated version of a myth, and among the several indexes is a useful one that
refers from minor characters to the major ones listed in the text. A handsome book,
and as useful as it is handsome.

Barker, Carol. *Arjun and His Village in India*; written and illus. by Carol Barker. Oxford,
1979. 79-40574. ISBN 0-19-279734-4. 32p. \$9.95.

Ad Through a description of twelve-year-old Arjun, his family and their way of life,
5-6 and his village in northwest India, Barker builds a picture of the life of a family of
peasant farmers. Some of the commentary is by Arjun, some by the author; the latter
gives background information about such aspects of life as religious observances or
education, while Arjun speaks of his family, his chores, and his feelings about school,
holidays, and his future. The two don't mesh very smoothly, in part because the
author's exposition is at times rambling or tedious. Still, the text is informative and
the tone objective. The illustrations are handsome technically, although on many
pages the paintings are so heavy with ornamental detail that they become crowded or
the balance of the composition is marred.

Bates, Betty. *Love Is Like Peanuts*. Holiday House, 1980. 79-21686. ISBN 0-8234-0402-1.
125p. \$7.95.

Ad A first person narration of Marianne's fourteenth summer, in which she takes a job
7-9 babysitting for brain-damaged Catsy, who's eight, and falls in love with Catsy's
brother, who's eighteen. The writing style is competent, and the story has some
warm family relationships—it just hasn't much of a story line. Catsy's problem is
never fully explained; she just seems a nervous, sometimes whining, child. Marianne
worries about whether Catsy's brother loves her and what their relationship is; when
he goes back to school at the end of the summer she decides he does love her and
she's glad they haven't had a sexual relationship. The only real action of the book is
in the firing of the crotchety housekeeper disliked by Catsy, and the hiring of Mari-
anne's calm, sympathetic aunt to take that job.

Bethancourt, T. Ernesto. *Doris Fein: Superspy*. Holiday House, 1980. 79-23339. ISBN 0-8234-0408-0. 155p. \$7.95.

R
6-9 A trip to New York is her high school graduation present; since her parents have already left for their vacation, Doris decides to get to New York a day early. After all, if her aunt and uncle aren't home, she can always stay in a hotel for one night. Her aunt isn't home, but her uncle, a UN representative of the small (invented) country of Dakama, is. There's a crisis, plans are changed, and she can't stay in their apartment, he says. At the hotel, she gets a note, purportedly from her aunt, but the handwriting's wrong. And that's how Doris and the attractive police department detective Carl Suzuki get embroiled in an intricate, dangerous, and fast-paced adventure. It's almost believable, save for some stock figures and for the fact that Doris emerges with twenty thousand dollars (her pay as a member of a federal agency, the employment having been a technicality at one point) with which she proposes to go off to Paris. What gives the story some substance—in addition to the pace and suspense—are the candor with which the Jewish protagonist and her Sansei colleague discuss minority groups and bias, and the cheerful honesty about her feelings expressed by Doris, who tells the story.

Bester, Roger. *Guess What?* written and illus. with photographs by Roger Bester. Crown, 1980. 79-24945. ISBN 0-517-54104-1. 32p. \$6.95.

R
3-5 yrs. While there are several other books in the same format, this guess-and-identify collection of photographs is especially geared to the limited experience and deductive abilities of the preschool child. The pattern used is, for example, "What has a mane, wears iron shoes (two pictures, one showing the top of a head and two ears, the other a horseshoe) and lives in a stable?" Then a double-page spread of a stable with a horse's head seen through a window, then (turn of page) a full-page photograph labelled "A horse." There's a bit of a game element, there are no exotic animals, and the book encourages observation.

Bornstein, Ruth Lercher. *Of Course a Goat*; written and illus. by Ruth Lercher Bornstein. Harper, 1980. 79-2015. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-020608-X; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-020609-8. 30p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.89 net.

Ad
K-2 The story is told through a dialogue between a mother and her small son, a conversation that begins, "Mother, may I have a goat?" Of course, she says, but in response to other questions she concludes that her boy must climb the mountain if he wants a goat. Then the boy (in response to queries about what he'll see from the top of the mountain, won't he be hungry, will the little goat he's found follow him home, etc.) indulges his imagination as he pictures his climb, his encounters with other creatures, and his tenderly carrying home a small goat (the word "kid" is not used) and his walk down the dark mountainside. At the end: ". . . and you'll be waiting," the boy says, and his mother is pictured, arms outstretched. A small, square book, this has a quite mood and a rather static text, but it's gentle and soothing in tone, and the simply composed pictures are in soft, cool colors save for the last sunset pages.

Branley, Franklyn Mansfield. *The Electromagnetic Spectrum; Key to the Universe*; illus. by Leonard D. Dank. T. Y. Crowell, 1979. 77-26591. Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-03868-2; Library ed. ISBN 0-690-03869-0. 125p. (Exploring Our Universe). Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.79 net.

R
8- Branley discusses the parts of the electromagnetic spectrum, the nature of light, matter and energy, and the body of knowledge that exists about electricity, magnetism, the relationship between the last two, and the theories held by some of the major researchers and theorists in physical science in the past. In the ensuing de-

scription of various manifestations of the behavior of parts of the spectrum, Branley demonstrates how integral a part it plays in the several scientific disciplines and in the applications to research in all of them. Branley is a practiced and lucid writer, as well as an authoritative voice; what may limit the readership for this book is the amount of information so tightly packed into the text, and the fact that the reader with no scientific background may find the terminology discouraging. Most of the diagrams are clear; a brief bibliography and an index are appended.

Byars, Betsy C. *The Night Swimmers*; illus. by Troy Howell. Delacorte, 1980. 79-53597. Trade ed. ISBN 0-440-06261-6; Library ed. ISBN 0-440-06262-4. 144p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.45 net.

R
5-7
*

A poignant and perceptive story about the relationships among three children in a family in which the mother is dead and the father a small-time but ambitious country-western singer-composer. Because Dad is gone at night, Retta (the oldest) is able to take her younger brothers, of whom she is in complete charge, to stealthily swim in a neighbor's pool, and it is when the pool's owner discovers the children and calls their father that the change comes into their lives; good-natured, affectionate Brendelle, their father's girlfriend, makes it clear that she's moving in. Retta is the protagonist and, although the feelings of her brothers are expressed, it is from her viewpoint that the story is written. What Byars achieves is a remarkably touching picture of a girl who has almost given up childhood; her mother gone, her father well-meaning but more concerned with his career than his children, Retta has been giving all her love and attention to her brothers. She is in despair and anger when the older of the two boys finds a friend of his own, and when the younger boy turns to his brother as a leader. *She's* always been the leader; she's always been the person to whom they turn for comfort and leadership, and suddenly she has learned that she needs the boys more than they need her. The final incident at the pool takes place when both boys have slipped away without her and she has angrily followed them, and it is a sweet relief, beautifully understated, when she can relinquish the role of mother and become a child. The story, deftly constructed and smoothly told and developed, ends with Brendelle making supper for Dad, while Retta half-listens from her bed, "And in the comfortable silence that followed, Retta fell asleep."

Chew, Ruth. *No Such Thing as a Witch*; written and illus. by Ruth Chew. Hastings House, 1980. 79-18153. ISBN 0-8038-5073-5. 112p. \$5.95.

Ad
2-4

Although their mother insists there's no such thing as a witch, Nora and Tad know better; they know, for example, that if you eat more than one piece of fudge made by their neighbor, Maggie, you can understand animals, and that if you eat three pieces you will turn into an animal. And that's the substance of the story: Nora turns into a mouse, and at another time Tad turns into a cat. Mother never suspects a thing. This is lightweight stuff, but it has plenty of action and it's easy to read; while the writing style has no distinction, it also has no serious flaws; there is little or no attempt at characterization.

Cohen, Miriam. *No Good in Art*; illus. by Lillian Hoban. Greenwillow, 1980. 79-16566. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-80234-6; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-84234-8. 32p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.63 net.

R
4-6
yrs.

Another story about Jim and his classmates, now out of kindergarten and in first grade, has illustrations that are bright and cozy, showing a cheerful teacher in a multiethnic classroom. Jim, whose work had been criticized by the art teacher in kindergarten, is convinced that he is no good in art; his friends hand in his unsigned

picture, and it is admired by everyone. Told in a simple, ingenuous style, the story makes a strong case for individuality and worth in self-expression and gives a good picture of a sensitive teacher who encourages creativity.

Conford, Ellen. *The Revenge of the Incredible Dr. Rancid and His Youthful Assistant, Jeffrey*. Little, 1980. 80-321. ISBN 0-316-152889. 132p. \$7.95.

Ad 4-6 Jeff, eleven, is cowed by the bullying of Dewey Belasco, a classmate who's much bigger than he; he's embarrassed when Dewey taunts him in the presence of Coco Siegelman, the nicest girl in the class. Jeff secretly writes when he's alone, and he puts all of his resentment toward Dewey and his admiration for Coco into the rambling Walter Mitty-ish novel about Dr. Rancid; the novel excerpts are interpolated periodically throughout the text and, while mildly amusing, do little to further the story. While defending a smaller child, Jeff gets into a fight with Dewey and, to his surprise, becomes instantly popular. The book has warm relationships within the family (mother a sports editor, father described as working in the city) especially in parental understanding when Jeff finally talks about his fear of Dewey; the writing is competent, but the story seems—in part due to uneven pace, in part to the Dr. Rancid excerpts—overextended.

Corey, Dorothy. *Everybody Takes Turns*; illus. by Lois Axeman. Whitman, 1980. 79-18652. ISBN 0-8075-2166-3. 32p. \$5.95.

Ad 2-4 yrs. This has the simple approach, the reinforcement by iteration, the variations on a theme that are found in the author's *You Go Away*, but it is not quite as successful in structure. Each page carries a brief sentence ("I have a turn," "You have a turn," "I take a turn first," "You take a turn second," "You have a turn," "I have a turn," "Jim has a turn, too," and so on) accompanied by a picture (slightly jagged line and wash) that shows a child flying a kite, going down a slide, checking out a library book. Later in the book there are some group pictures, and some pictures of adults taking turns. Useful as a concept book but a bit static.

Delton, Judy. *Lee Henry's Best Friend*; illus. by John Faulkner. Whitman, 1980. 79-16902. ISBN 0-8075-4417-5. 32p. \$5.95.

R K-2 Lee Henry's best friend always supports him, never cheats, takes turns at doing things, and is clearly a stellar character; when he moves away Lee Henry is desolate. In fact, they're both desolate and know they'll never have anyone else as a best friend. Eventually a new boy in the neighborhood makes overtures, and Lee Henry responds; he warns the boy that they can't be best friends. That's fine, his new acquaintance says, he has a best friend he's left behind in California. Thus begins a new friendship. The topic is treated lightly, but the point is made. This isn't very substantive as a story but it may perhaps be as effective in assuaging pangs of separation as a deeper treatment. The illustrations have a brisk line, almost in cartoon style.

Dowden, Anne Ophelia Todd. *This Noble Harvest; A Chronicle of Herbs*; written and illus. by Anne Ophelia Dowden. Collins, 1979. 79-12021. ISBN 0-529-05548-1. 80p. \$12.95.

R 7-* The beauty and precision of detail in Dowden's botanical drawings make them as decorative as they are useful for identification; enlarged drawings of plant parts and captions for many of the illustrations add to the utility. The text describes the uses of herbs in cosmetics, medicine, cooking, cleaning, and other fields, and it goes extensively into the history of herbs, including the magical qualities attributed to many of them and the superstitions about them. An intriguing subject; a handsome book.

Dygaard, Thomas J. *Point Spread*. Morrow, 1980. 79-24511. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-22222-6; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-32222-0. 192p. Trade ed. \$6.95; Library ed. \$6.67 net.

M
7-9 Lou Powers, star linebacker on a college football team, is handed an envelope by a stranger; he finds the envelope contains five hundred dollars when he opens it after going back to the fraternity house. Afraid that he won't be believed if he tells the coach he's not taking bribe money, Lou is silent and worried. The rest of the story, punctuated by game sequences and by a rift with Lou's fiancée, has to do with the discovery that another member of the team has been taking bribes and with the subsequent suspicion and hostility among members of the team when there's an FBI investigation. There are episodes that have drama and suspense, but the story as a whole moves at an uneven pace; the writing style is undistinguished and the characterization minimal.

East, Ben. *Found Alive*; illus. by Jack Dahl; ed. by Jerolyn Nentl and Howard Schroeder. Crestwood House, 1979. 79-53749. Hardcover ed. ISBN 0-89686-044-2; Paper ed. ISBN 0-89686-052-3. 47p. Hardcover ed. \$5.95; Paper ed. \$2.50.

Ad
3-5 In a series of books based on interviews with people who have survived crises in the wilds, an editor of *Outdoor Life* magazine has drawn on his files; the material has been adapted for children by Jerolyn Nentl. Here fourteen-year-old Junior is camping with his parents and his younger brother in a wildlife refuge in the North Woods in the deer-hunting season. Junior, who is afraid of the dark, realizes he is lost at twilight of the first day; while his brother also loses his way, he gets back to camp by himself. The story, adequately told but printed in light type face that produces a crowded, inadequately spaced page, has inherent drama that is softened by the flat tone. The book ends with Junior being spotted by a helicopter pilot, after search parties have spent five fruitless days looking for him. Other titles in the series are *Danger in the Air*, *Desperate Search*, *Forty Days Lost*, *Frozen Terror*, *Grizzly!*, *Mistaken Journey*, and *Trapped in Devil's Hole*.

Elliott, Alan C. *On Sunday the Wind Came*; illus. by Susan Bonners. Morrow, 1980. 79-19083. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-22218-8; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-32218-2. 32p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.63 net.

Ad
K-2 Soft, blurry watercolor pictures in blue, white, and yellow capture the atmospheric effects of a week of changeable weather—and the weather is the story, as a child describes the rain, fog, sleet, snow, and warming sun, and tells how he played each day, or how he stayed indoors and observed meteorological phenomena. Not much story line, but some action in each day's small events; the text is simply written but a bit choppy.

Epstein, Samuel. *She Never Looked Back; Margaret Mead in Samoa*; by Sam and Beryl Epstein; illus. by Victor Juhasz. Coward, 1980. 78-31821. ISBN 0-698-30715-1. 64p. \$5.99.

R
4-6 Although this focuses on Mead's life and work in Samoa, gathering material for *The Coming of Age in Samoa*, it also gives biographical information that covers the whole span of her life and her distinguished career. This covers an interesting period in Mead's life, and although the writing is rather dry, the book has good balance and reflects the scientific attitudes and the research methods used by anthropologists in the field. The illustrations are adequate, more decorative than informative and, in two instances, seem in conflict with the text about a minor detail of dress.

Farley, Carol J. *Ms. Isabelle Cornell, Herself*. Atheneum, 1980. 79-22667. ISBN 0-689-30740-3. 156p. \$7.95.

Ad 5-7 Hostile toward her new stepfather, an Army chaplain, and bitterly resentful because she has to leave her friends to go to a Korean post, Ibbey (Isabelle) glowers, sulks, and complains until she's alienated all the members of her family. She makes a few friends, and through them becomes involved in studying the Korean alphabet; this is useful when she decides to take sanctuary in a mountaintop monastery—but she never gets there. En route, she sees something that makes her sure she's found the answer to the black market operations that have baffled the authorities, so she dashes back home. Sure enough, Ibbey has solved the mystery; in a compressed final scene, it is indicated that she's thawed toward her stepfather, adjusted to Korea, and accepted her lot. The symbols of the Korean alphabet are appended in a do-it-yourself translation of some English words. The pace of the story is uneven, but that's alleviated by the humor of some of the dialogue and by the interesting setting; characterization is shallow but consistent.

Fisher, Aileen Lucia. *I Stood Upon A Mountain*; illus. by Blair Lent. T. Y. Crowell, 1979. 79-3983. Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-03977-8; Library ed. ISBN 0-690-03978-6. 40p. Trade ed. \$9.95; Library ed. \$9.79 net.

R K-3 In flowing, vibrant watercolor Lent pictures the ocean, the desert at sunset, the verdant hills, and other natural scenes of beauty, as a small child wonders how it all began. The free pattern of poetic thought is deftly adapted to a simple sequence and repetition; each time the child greets someone with "Wonderful world," she gets a different explanation of how the world began. There are many answers, she concludes, but "I am still / filled with a wonder / that needs no answer / no answer at all." A book for a quiet moment, a book to stimulate conjecture, a book to encourage awareness of the environment.

Flournoy, Valerie. *The Twins Strike Back*; illus. by Diane deGroat. Dial, 1980. 79-21960. Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-8691-3; Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-8692-1. 28p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.45 net.

Ad 2-3 Softly shaded black and white drawings illustrate a story about the eighth birthday of May and Ivy, identical twins (like the author and her sister) who are tired of being thought of as duplicates. They want to be treated as individuals, and they think of a scheme to so startle their older sister and their teasing cousin that the two will be impressed into remembering how May and Ivy feel. The girls pretend that they are telepathic, and although they confess, at the end of the day, that it was a ruse, sister Bernardine and cousin Nate do realize how much Ivy and May want to be thought of as more than just "the twins." Not a stirring story, not impressive in style, but it's modestly realistic, and reflects an attitude with which readers who are twins can sympathize.

Francis, Dorothy Brenner. *Shoplifting; The Crime Everybody Pays For*. Elsevier/Nelson, 1980. 79-20807. ISBN 0-525-66658-3. 128p. \$7.95.

Ad 6-9 Francis gives figures on the cost of shoplifting, the kinds of people who steal from stores, and the increasing numbers of shoplifters. She describes, in part through anecdotes, some of the tricks shoplifters use and points out how many are caught, discussing the penalties for this crime and the devices that are used in attempts to prevent it. The double messages of the book are that it isn't worth the risk, and that it increases—because merchants' losses must be compensated for, and because of the

high costs of security systems—the prices for all consumers. The book gives some useful facts, but is weakened by the concocted air of the anecdotes and by the amount of repetition in the exposition. A divided bibliography and an index are included.

Freedman, Russell. *Tooth and Claw; A Look at Animal Weapons*. Holiday House, 1980. 79-22442. ISBN 0-8234-0406-4. 40p. illus. with photographs. \$7.95.

R
2-4 Photographs of excellent quality extend the text of a fine introduction to the subject of those physiological features by which animals defend themselves. The writing is simple and straightforward, the print large and amply spaced, the continuous text concise and accurate. An index is appended.

Freschet, Berniece. *The Watersnake*; illus. by Susanne Suba. Scribner, 1979. 78-31103. ISBN 0-684-16112-5. 32p. \$7.95.

Ad
2-4 Freschet uses a fictional framework to describe the environment and habits of a watersnake, describing the abortive attempts of some boys—in several incidents—to catch the huge snake they call Pitt, reputed to be the biggest watersnake in the county. Between the incidents about the boys, Freschet provides, simply and accurately, facts about what watersnakes eat, how they shed their old skins, what they do in winter, how they evade predators, and what other creatures share their environment. Unfortunately, the two approaches don't quite mesh: the sporadic fictionalization never becomes a story and is slow by the factual passages, and the latter seem only interrupted by the fiction.

Freschet, Berniece. *Where's Henrietta's Hen?* illus. by Lorinda Bryan Cauley. Putnam, 1980. 78-11158. ISBN 0-399-20669-8. 32p. \$7.95.

Ad
3-5
yrs. One morning when Henrietta went to look for the breakfast egg laid by her little red hen, she found neither egg nor hen. Several of the barnyard animals, as well as some birds and frogs, made suggestions for finding the hen, and finally Henrietta found her nesting in a haystack. Some time later, the hen appeared, followed by eight downy chicks. The story is simply told, and it can give young children some idea of what creatures are found on a farm; it also includes some experience in counting ("She saw two goats drinking water, three ducks swimming, and four frogs sitting on a log, but no little red hen.") although it is not a counting book. The illustrations, line drawings tinted in beige and rose tones, are adequately executed but rather cluttered.

Garelick, May. *The Tremendous Tree Book*; by May Garelick and Barbara Brenner; illus. by Fred Brenner. Four Winds, 1979. 79-11327. ISBN 0-590-07590-X. 40p. \$8.95.

Ad
K-3 Cut paper in muted tones is used for the illustrations, with black and white drawings of a small raccoon or squirrel on most pages, with balloons carrying their comments. The writing style is simple, the text uninterrupted but fragmented in mood because it moves rather abruptly from topic to topic. The information is accurate, but it isn't always fully explanatory; under "Tree Food," for example, the text reads, "A tree makes food in its leaves. Sunbeams shine on green leaves, mix with air and water and make sugar. A tree makes food for itself as long as its leaves are green." At the foot of the page, the squirrel says "That's what they call pho-to-syn-the-sis." But will children understand that the process is internal rather than on the leaf surface?

Grimm, Jakob Ludwig Karl. *Hansel and Gretel*; tr. from the German by Elizabeth D. Crawford; illus. by Lisbeth Zwerger. Morrow, 1980. 79-989. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-22198-X; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-32198-4. 26p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.63 net.

R
K-3 In a picture book format, a new translation of a familiar story adheres closely to the original but is smoothly and discriminantly simplified. The illustrations, by an eminent Austrian illustrator, are in ink and wash; save for an occasional background detail, the backgrounds are in blended earth tones. The figures are strongly defined, but delicately tinted and detailed, and they are prominent in full-color pages with effectively simple composition.

Gross, Ruth Belov. *If You Were a Ballet Dancer*. Dial, 1980. 79-3583. Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-5383-7; Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-5384-5. 48p. illus. with photographs. Trade ed. \$6.95; Library ed. \$6.46 net.

R
3-5 In question-and-answer format, the text describes ballet dancing for readers who know nothing about the art; text and photographs are carefully combined, and a brief list that describes some ballet terms is appended. The questions seem contrived occasionally, but the responses they elicit cover basic information: when dancers begin taking lessons, how they practice, what they wear, how hard they work (and how, unless they are stars, they may need other jobs to eke out enough to live on) and how much they enjoy their profession. Gross writes simply and directly, stressing the fact that ballet dancing is for both sexes and providing a good introduction to the subject.

Hoover, H. M. *Return to Earth*. Viking, 1980. 79-18846. ISBN 0-670-59593-4. 172p. \$9.95.

R
6-10 A deftly constructed and nicely paced science fiction story is set in the year 3307, when Galen Innes, administrator of another planet, comes back to an earth governed by corporations, and meets the heiress to one of the most powerful of these, Samara. When her mother, director of the corporation, is killed and Samara and Galen are captured and taken to a desert to die, it is clear that the Dolmen, leader of a religious cult, has become more powerful and more ambitious than anyone had realized. Escaping, Samara and Galen fly to a moon colony to rest and plan their strategy; they return to earth, and use wit and wiles rather than confrontation to weaken the Dolmen's power. The ending is dramatically satisfying, the writing style polished.

Jaspersohn, William. *The Ballpark*; written and illus. with photographs by William Jaspersohn. Little, 1980. 79-22835. Hardcover ed. ISBN 0-316-45812-0; Paper ed. ISBN 0-316-45811-2. 120p. Hardcover ed. \$8.95; Paper ed. \$4.95.

R
4-7 Profusely illustrated with photographs, the text describes in great detail all of the myriad activities that go on in a major league ballpark on the day of a home game. The place is Fenway Park, the game is played between the Red Sox and the Kansas City Royals, and there are many pictures of the players on both teams; the focus is not on the game, however, but on other aspects of the day, and baseball fans should enjoy the behind-the-scenes view of preparations in the commissary, the offices, the press box, the locker rooms, the scoreboard, and on the field. Bits of odd information include such items as the fact that an array of toiletries is provided for visiting teams, or the fact that the home plate umpire spends time before the game rubbing a special kind of mud on sixty baseballs. The writing is crisp and rather dry, but there's inherent appeal in the subject, and the material is nicely organized and informative.

Jenner, Bruce. *The Olympics and Me*; by Bruce Jenner with R. Smith Killper. Doubleday, 1979. 79-7496. Trade ed. ISBN 0-385-14928-X; Library ed. ISBN 0-385-14929-8. 152p. illus. with photographs. Trade ed. \$6.95; Library ed. \$7.90 net.

M
5-7 The winner of the 1976 Olympics decathlon describes his childhood, his training for meets, his participation in the Olympics, and the Special Olympics for the handicapped; he also gives a great deal of information about his personal life. Since most readers of sports books or sports biographies are interested primarily in that aspect of an athlete's life, the rather gushy material about Jenner's private life may not be appealing. The writing has a self-adulatory tone, thinly masked by humor (most evident in captions for photographs) and is dusted with name-dropping. An index is appended.

Jones, Hettie. *I Hate to Talk About Your Mother*. Delacorte, 1980. 79-53601. ISBN 0-440-04572-X. 224p. \$8.95.

NR
7-9 Alicia is thirteen, the illegitimate child of a Dominican father and a mother whose background is Polish-American; her mother, Fay, punctuates the succession of men in her life with heavy drinking. When Fay and Alicia go to the New Jersey shore for a weekend at a borrowed cottage, Fay quickly picks up a man; she's brought a bottle with her. Alicia, left on her own, meets a lusty boy who almost seduces her, and also a disturbed girl her own age; there are several incidents in which there is dramatic action, the final one an abortive attempt of the two girls to run away (Alicia wants to get back home, while her mother wants to stay) that ends with Alicia falsely arrested for theft and the other girl caught in a fire. The strength of the story is the candid exploration of small town prejudice and of Alicia's feelings about her parentage and her budding sexuality, both expressed in frank language and in equally frank episodes, but there are too many issues, too many viewpoints, too much drama crowded into a weekend.

Kaufman, Charles. *The Frog and the Beanpole*. Lothrop, 1980. 79-21377. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-41938-0; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-51938-5. 192p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.63 net.

R
4-6 Wesley is a laboratory frog, but not just your garden variety of frog; he's invisible. He's also literate and articulate, and he runs away from the malevolent scientist (bit of type-casting here) to escape whatever horrible fate Professor Snodgrass had planned. Wesley becomes the friend and comforter of ten-year-old Marveline, about to be moved out of a relative's home, and not happy about the prospect. So Marveline, who decides to call herself Holly, runs away with Wesley and they join a circus, since he can perform marvelous leaps, visible because of his costumes. He talks, but only to Holly. They are, of course, pursued by Snodgrass, but they're protected by their circus family and eventually Wesley goes back to his home in Central America and Holly is retrieved by a welcoming aunt and uncle. The plot is fantastic but the approach is bland, the writing style polished and humorous. Kaufman achieves the goal of all fantasy writers; he makes his characters and their adventures plausible within the parameters of the fantasy—and they are sympathetic and entertaining characters.

Keats, Ezra Jack. *Maggie and the Pirate*; written and illus. by Ezra Jack Keats. Four Winds, 1980. 78-23834. ISBN 0-590-07602-7. 34p. \$8.95.

Ad
K-2 A tropical setting gives Keats the opportunity for some flamboyantly colorful watercolor pictures, the blue/green or flame/gold skies a background for the activities of Maggie and her friends, as she hunts for the culprit who stole her pet cricket in its

cage. The “pirate,” as he had signed his note (“The pirate was here.”), is found in a tree house, and in the scuffle for the cage, children and cricket fall in the water below the tree. Maggie mourns, the pirate is penitent and brings Maggie a new cricket, and the story ends with Maggie, pirate, and two other children sitting silently in the dark, while “they listened to the cricket. Crickets all around joined in.” Adequately told, but a bit over-extended and with a weak ending—but handsome.

Krensky, Stephen. *A Troll in Passing*. Atheneum, 1980. 79-22283. ISBN 0-689-30747-0. 144p. \$7.95.

R Morgan was a nonconformist. All the other trolls accepted their apprenticeships,
4-6 doted properly on treasure, and firmly believed that sunlight would turn them to stone. Not Morgan, who kept his eyes and his mind open; that’s why it was he who found a way to outwit the army of giant trolls who were bent on evicting Morgan’s tribe from their cozy mountain caves. Krensky’s writing style, fluent and sophisticated, is not bland, easy reading, but it’s well worth pursuing in a nicely crafted story that has pace, humor, and momentum.

Lampman, Evelyn Sibley. *Three Knocks on the Wall*. Atheneum, 1980. 79-23264. ISBN 0-689-50167-6. 192p. \$8.95.

R Marty, who tells the story, lives in a small Oregon town, and she’d thought she
5-6 knew all about her neighbors, so she was baffled by who it could be knocking on the high board fence that surrounded the house next door. Lampman builds in just enough suspense to hold the reader as the truth slowly emerges: the knocker is the illegitimate child, hidden for ten years, of the timid daughter of a prim, hostile widow. While the emergence of mother and child, after the grandmother dies in the World War I influenza epidemic, is the climax of the story, the substance of it is prejudice, in this case the prejudice against illegitimacy; there is another character in the story, a dressmaker, who is almost a pariah because her mother had not been wed. The theme is nicely balanced by other aspects of Marty’s life, the story has good dialogue and characterization, it moves smoothly, and it has good period details.

Leen, Nina. *Cats*; written and illus. with photographs by Nina Leen. Holt, 1980. 79-22137. ISBN 0-03-052331-1. 77p. \$7.95.

Ad Like Leen’s earlier books on bats, monkeys, and snakes, this is profusely illus-
3-5 trated by photographs of fine quality. The text is clearly by a cat-lover, and seems a bit less objective than the texts of previous books; it covers such topics as intelligence, hearing, use of voice, and the female cat’s care of its kittens, but there are also some sections (“Kitten at Play,” or “A Swim in the Bathtub”) that verge on calendar-art in appeal. The text concludes with a series of pictures, with descriptive comments, on purebred cats.

Lilius, Irmelin Sandman. *Gold Crown Lane*; tr. by Marianne Helweg; illus. by Ionicus. Delacorte/Seymour Lawrence, 1980. 79-2103. Trade ed. ISBN 0-440-04231-3; Library ed. ISBN 0-440-04232-1. 101p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.45 net.

Ad In the first of a trilogy written by a Finnish author and translated from the Swedish,
5-6 a fictional small Finnish town is the setting that is ostensibly about the three sisters Sanna, Silja, and Sissela (their older brother plays a minor role) but that has so strong a sense of community life and the political machinations among elected officials that the book often seems as much a commentary on adult behavior as it does a story about the girls. They become involved with the mystery of a customs official who has disappeared and with the local ambivalence about the smuggling that has gone on for

generations in the coastal village of Tulavall. The translation reads smoothly, and the setting has appeal, but the writing is densely packed, and the combination of that and the large numbers of characters seem a minor weakness in the story.

Lilius, Irmelin Sandman. *The Goldmaker's House*; tr. by Joan Tate; illus. by Ionicus. Delacorte/Seymour Lawrence, 1980. 79-2104. Trade ed. ISBN 0-440-04200-3; Library ed. ISBN 0-440-04201-1. 86p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.45 net.

Ad 5-6 This has the same strengths and weaknesses as its predecessor, continuing the story of the three sisters but shifting periodically to the separate experiences of their friend Bonnadea, an orphan who has the independence of Pippi Longstocking but who somehow is pressed into service by a rather mysterious and not altogether savory alchemist. Also emerging as a major character is the healer and herb-woman Fia Klockarbacken; it is to Fia that the girls' mother goes to recuperate when she has a breakdown and decides to leave her family, and it becomes increasingly clear that Fia has magical powers. Bonnadea, too, has fantastic experiences, so that as a series this moves more toward fantasy than (as in the first book) realism. Again, the interweaving of subplots and characters is intricate; in this volume the shift in viewpoint (Bonnadea's, then the sisters', and back again) is more obvious.

Lilius, Irmelin Sandman. *Horses of the Night*; tr. by Joan Tate; illus. by Ionicus. Delacorte/Seymour Lawrence, 1980. 79-2105. Trade ed. ISBN 0-440-04450-2; Library ed. ISBN 0-440-04451-0. 137p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.45 net.

Ad 5-6 In the final volume of the three books about the imaginary Finnish village of Tulavall) save the village when it is threatened by the Cossack soldiers imported by as her powers become more obvious. In this book, there is a larger fantasy component: for one thing the horses of the title (legendary beasts that are the guardians of Tulavall) save the village when it is threatened by the Cossacks soldiers imported by the powerful, mercenary alderman, Klingkors. Much of the first two chapters is devoted to folklore from Tulavall's past, and Fia tells the children about her own role in the history. The plot, in this volume, concerns the efforts of Lasse and Niklas, two young men, to expose Klingkors and restore justice to the village, an effort in which the older of the two sisters (Sanna and Silja) are helpful. The story ends with an explosion in which Lasse is killed, but that exposes the sanctimonious Klingkors and brings the result that Lasse and Niklas have sought. There's also a strong hint of a romance between Niklas and Silja, not a complete surprise although throughout the three books there seems a slight discrepancy between the way Silja is depicted (her games, her chores, her conversation) as a character and the responsibility and danger she incurs.

Luzzatto, Paola Caboara, ad. *Long Ago When the Earth Was Flat; Three Tales from Africa*; illus. by Aimone Sambuy. Collins, 1980. 79-14426. Trade ed. ISBN 0-529-05541-4; Library ed. ISBN 0-529-05542-2. 44p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.91 net.

R K-2 Folktales from three African stories are retold with bland simplicity. From Tanzania, "How the Mountains Came to Be," from Nigeria, "How the Sun Got Into the Sky," and from Zaire, "How People Got Fire." They can be told, as adapted, to very young children, but could use some drama or embellishment as "why" stories told to older children; an author's note explains that African storytellers often introduced the tales with a patterned opening, and that singing, dancing, dramatization, and audience participation enlivened them. The illustrations, framed on oversize pages, are nicely used as part of the page design; although the pictures for the first tale are

rather ineffectual pastel and include one snow scene that seems out of place, those for the second and third tales are handsome in their strong colors and composition.

McCannon, Dindga. *Wilhemina Jones, Future Star*. Delacorte, 1980. 79-53602. ISBN 0-440-09857-2. 208p. \$8.95.

R
7-10 The story is set in Harlem at the time of the Vietnam War; it is told by Willi, who is sixteen when she begins describing her longing for Skeeter, who's in boot camp, and her equally strong longing for her eighteenth birthday, when she can leave her loving but tyrannical mother and have a place of her own. Willi wants independence, but she wants even more to have a place where she can paint in peace; the title refers to an award given a young artist at an all-black art show, and Willi wins it. McCannon has done a fine job in integrating a love story, the description of Willi's growth as an artist, the development of her interest in civil rights, and even some minor plot threads about some of her relationships with other characters; all the elements of the story fuse nicely. The characters vary in depth of treatment; Willi's mother, with her coarse language, her vigilant domination of her daughter, and her temper, is the strongest. The story ends with Skeeter out of the army and moving into an apartment with Willi to make sure they suit each other before their marriage, planned for some months later.

McKay, Robert. *The Girl Who Wanted to Run the Boston Marathon*. Elsevier/Nelson, 1980. 79-20928. ISBN 0-525-66663-X. 188p. \$7.95.

Ad
7-9 Chris, seventeen, is determined to enter the Boston Marathon, and is running daily to train for it; one day she crashes into a young man, Skip, who becomes her friend, her trainer, and her fiancé. She doesn't know at first that he's a top rated long distance runner, and she doesn't find out until much later that the shabby Skip is a multimillionaire. She learns this when she is hospitalized and Skip insists on getting, and paying for, the best care and a private nurse. Since the author has introduced, in two brief chapters that seem unrelated to the rest of the story, a young doctor who's concerned with the mysteries of lupus erythematosus, it will be clear to readers that Chris (who has occasional baffling symptoms) is a victim of the disease. The story ends abruptly when Chris, feverish and hallucinating, jumps out of the hospital window and is killed, leaving Skip and her father, an alcoholic, to mourn. The ending seems weak not because the death is abrupt, but because the brief scene after that is so fragmented; either more or less would have seemed appropriate. While the several facets of the story (lupus, alcohol problem, training for the marathon, love) are all believable, they don't quite mesh; the characters are adequately drawn, although only Chris's father is depicted in any depth. The strong features of the book are the writing style and—especially for runners—the details of the practice runs.

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Through Grandpa's Eyes*; illus. by Deborah Ray. Harper, 1980. 79-2019. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-024044-X; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-024043-1. 40p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.79 net.

R
K-3 John describes a day spent with Nana and Grandpa, who is blind. He's impressed by how much sharper Grandpa's other senses are: he can tell the direction of the wind, identify the flowers on the breakfast table, correct John's notes when they are playing cello duets. The illustrations are all soft line and soft color, appropriate for the gentle quality of the story, in which the author makes it clear that Grandpa leads a full, active, and happy life. Grandma sculpts, by the way. No stereotypes here, just a warm, special relationship between a child and his grandparents, both busy and creative.

McNulty, Faith. *The Elephant Who Couldn't Forget*; illus. by Marc Simont. Harper, 1980. 79-2741. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-024145-4; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-024146-2. 62p. (I Can Read Books) Trade ed. \$5.95; Library ed. \$6.89 net.

R
1-2 A noted nature writer, McNulty has combined accurate information about elephant behavior with some mild anthropomorphism in a story about a small elephant, Congo, who was proud of the fact that his memory was (for his age) better than most elephants. He became angry one day when his brother Zambesi pushed him down and squirted mud in his eye, and vowed never to forget—but not forgetting meant not forgiving, and so Congo was left out of a great deal of group fun in his avoidance of Zambesi. His wise grandmother gently pointed out that Congo had forgotten one thing: one must remember those things that are important, that Zambesi's one rough act was less important than the fact that he was Congo's brother. So the breach is healed, and Congo, as the story ends, says happily, "I have a super memory. And I will always remember what to forget." An appealing subject, a small lesson on brotherhood and charity, and a story that is right in length and complexity for the beginning independent reader; illustrated in improbable lavender (elephants) and green (lion) pictures that have vigor and tenderness, the book should also appeal to the read-aloud audience.

McPhail, David. *Grandfather's Cake*; written and illus. by David McPhail. Scribner, 1979. 79-15810. ISBN 0-684-16113-3. 38p. \$7.95.

M
K-2 Peter and Andrew have a series of encounters as they are guiding their pony toward the hills where Grandpa is tending sheep. A piece of freshly-baked chocolate cake is in the basket on the pony's back, and a fox comes out of the bushes and starts to take the cake; a big bear intervenes just in time and then he reaches for the cake. A masked bandit intervenes just in time, and then he is untying the basket when the pony kicks him. The boys are delighted when they reach Grandpa and find that there are pieces of cake in the basket for them, too. And an apple for the pony. The nick-of-time interventions seem forced, and the fact that the "big black bear" uses dialect ("... take yo' hands off it," and "No need to trouble yo'selfs...") seems a dubious choice. The illustrations, ink drawings with effective use of line and hatching, are deft but just a bit grim.

Manchel, Frank. *The Box-Office Clowns; Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis, Mel Brooks, Woody Allen*. Watts, 1979. 79-10276. ISBN 0-531-02881-X. 120p. illus. with photographs. \$6.90.

Ad
7-10 Although not presented as a series, this is Manchel's third book about film comics; it continues the account of Hollywood's major comedians that began with *Yesterday's Clowns; from Laurel and Hardy to the Marx Brothers*. After a brief review of some earlier comedians and a discussion of the waning of film comedy in the 1950's followed by its rejuvenation in the 1960's (in part due to the influence of television), Manchel gives detailed accounts of the lives and careers of the four comedians of the subtitle. Lightened here and there by some of the comedians' better gags, the text seems heavy, perhaps because the author so exhaustively examines every success, every failure, every program and film that Hope, Lewis (and Dean Martin, although his name isn't included in the subtitle), Brooks, and Allen had. An index and a divided bibliography are provided.

Masterman-Smith, Virginia. *The Treasure Trap*; illus. by Roseanne Litzinger. Four Winds, 1979. 79-11722. ISBN 0-590-07615-9. 200p. \$7.95.

The story is told by Billy, who becomes Angel's friend when she and her father move into the house next door; the former owner of the house had disappeared seven

M 4-6 years before, and it is said that there is a lost hoard somewhere. Angel, who is determined to show her archeologist father that she's capable of finding treasure and should be allowed to go with him on his digs, is sure she can find the treasure. What she and Billy find is the remains of the former owner, in a conclusion that would be more effective if it were more credible. The writing has some humor and, although it is often superficial, some pace and suspense, but the story has a fragmented quality and an aura of concoction.

Mearian, Judy Frank. *Someone Slightly Different*. Dial, 1980. 79-22514. Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-8370-1; Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-8371-X. 192p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.45 net.

Ad 5-7 When she was a toddler, thirteen-year-old Martha remembers, her father had gone out to get some gas, and that was the last she ever saw of him. Now divorced, her mother works; Marty is teased by some of her classmates for being a "latchkey kid," and taunted again when one of them learns that her mother is driving a cab. Then someone slightly different enters their lives: Marty's paternal grandmother, Floss, comes for a visit and decides to stay, and for Marty home becomes a place of warmth and welcome. Some of the things Floss does are a bit odd, like loudly cheering at a school spelling match—or being a racetrack devotee, but she's fun. And when she dies suddenly (angina) it develops that Mom had learned from Floss to have fun, too; she'd always been strict and serious, but she had seen how much happier Floss made their lives, and say, in a positive ending note, "See? I'm changing. I may never be as much fun as Floss, but I can try." There's enough about Marty's relationships with peers and her school life to give the story balance, and the writing style and characterization are sound, but the book has little impetus or story line; it is more the development of a situation than of a plot.

Mendonca, Susan. *Tough Choices*. Dial, 1980. 79-3584. Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-8811-8; Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-8809-6. 160p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.45 net.

Ad 7-9 The story of a child's relationships to her divorced parents, her ambivalence about which one she wants to live with, and her conflicting loyalties, are more important here than the plot. Thirteen-year-old Crystal feels more secure living with her father and his wife, and she loves and is loved by her small half-sister; she feels sorry for her mother, who doesn't want to live alone but who forgets Crystal as soon as a new man comes into her life, and who has several times demonstrated what, to Crystal, seems rejection for this reason. The book ends with Crystal starting to run off with a sympathetic boy, but deciding to return to her father and write the judge asking that he be her legal guardian. The characters are well-defined, the writing style smooth, and the dialogue natural, but the story line is overshadowed by the situation.

Murphy, Jim. *Harold Thinks Big*; illus. by Susanna Natti. Crown, 1980. 79-24199. ISBN 0-517-53912-8. 48p. \$6.95.

Ad K-2 Boy pig meets girl, pig loses girl, pig finds girl. That is the plot of a lightly written picture book illustrated with casual line and wash drawings that have little subtlety or charm, but plenty of vitality. The story is written in a bland, easy-reading style that has humor, particularly in the scene in which Harold, besotted with the cheerleading pig who really prefers the star of the Poonton Bay Porkers' football team, pulls out all stops, flooding the field with balloons ("Harold and Esther Forever," they say) and arranging for the scoreboard to say "Harold thinks Esther is Wonderful." He's thought big, as advised by his lawyer, and it hasn't worked; happily, his old friend Susie thinks the whole thing was fun and says she likes balloons, so Harold is soothed.

Myers, Walter Dean. *The Black Pearl & The Ghost or One Mystery After Another*; illus. by Robert Quackenbush. Viking, 1980. 79-20268. ISBN 0-670-17284-7. 40p. \$6.95.

Ad 3-4 The cheerfully colored, busy pictures for two short stories add nothing to creation of mood and perhaps are meant to indicate that both the detective story and the ghost story are not meant to be taken seriously. Both tales have the same format: the detective who investigates the theft of the priceless black pearl and the professional ghost catcher who investigates the ghostly noises in Bleek Manor are repeatedly and erroneously sure they've caught their prey. In "The Black Pearl," the detective jumps to one false conclusion after another; in "The Ghost" the hunter no sooner gets rid of one noise than he must investigate a sound of another sort. The humor is slapstick, but it's there, and there's hardly a page without action.

Newman, Robert. *The Case of the Vanishing Corpse*. Atheneum, 1980. 79-22078. ISBN 0-689-30755-1. 228p. \$8.95.

Ad 5-7 A sequel to *The Case of the Baker Street Irregular* (Reviewed in the September, 1978 issue) is also set in nineteenth century London, and again young Andrew and his friend Sara are instrumental in solving the mystery that not only involves a vanished corpse, a missing girl, several jewelry thefts, and a not-quite-believable, even as a fake, Eastern mystic, but also produces a heroic young Scotland Yard constable and his stereotyped obtuse superior, Inspector Finch. There's plenty of action, several blasts at sexism, and a style that is more impressive than the intricate plot.

Oakley, Graham, illus. *Magical Changes*. Atheneum, 1980. 79-2784. ISBN 0-689-30732-2. 32p. \$10.95.

R All Ages * Using cut pages to make pictures that change, match, or mix is not a new idea; what Oakley has done with it is to take the idea and play with it brilliantly. He uses columnar connections for the halves of both pages, so that the narrow neck of a vase becomes a bedpost, a tree limb, a swan's neck, a factory chimney, a mushroom stem, et cetera. There's a variety of mood and style (some combinations are romantic, some comic, some grotesque) but no variation in the imaginative quality of the concepts or the polished technique of his draughtsmanship and his painting.

Pfeffer, Susan Beth. *Just Between Us*; illus. by Lorna Tomei. Delacorte, 1980. 79-53606. Trade ed. ISBN 0-440-05045-6; Library ed. ISBN 0-440-05046-4. 160p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.45 net.

Ad 4-6 Cass, who tells the story, knows that she has irritated more than one person by repeating something they've told her, not a fact they've asked to be kept secret, but one that she ought to have had enough discretion to keep to herself. Prompted by her best friend's anger, Cass embarks on a behavior conditioning program: any day she keeps a secret (without being told it's a secret) for ten days, she gets a dollar. It works, and Cass uses her new knowledge to help bridge a gap between her two best friends, one of whom has been especially hostile toward the other. The development is believable but uneven in pace, especially toward the end of the story; characterization and writing style are competent, but this has less cohesion and impact than Pfeffer's books for older readers.

Platt, Kin. *The Ape Inside Me*. Lippincott, 1979. 79-2402. Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-31826-X; Library ed. ISBN 0-397-31863-4. 117p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.89 net.

Eddie is fifteen, thin and stoop-shouldered. He doesn't look like a fighter, but he is, and he is well aware of the ape inside him, the angry alter ego he calls Kong. Eddie,

Ad 6-9 who tells the story, talks to Kong, and Kong to him; this is Eddie's inner battle and Kong, his temper, is his recognized enemy. His home situation isn't a happy one, and he gets well-meant but not effectual help from the man he works for part-time and from a boxing coach, but it's only Eddie who can beat the ape inside him. Adequately written if not strongly plotted, the story is convincing psychologically despite the heavily-used device of Eddie-Kong dialogues, and it is simply enough written to be useful for slow readers in the upper grades.

Poole, Victoria. *Thursday's Child*. Little, 1980. 79-25767. ISBN 0-316-713341. 352p. illus. with photographs. \$10.95.

R 8- Like Doris Lund's *Eric*, this is a true, detailed, moving, and occasionally humorous account of a child's serious illness, the humor resting in some of the dialogue and in peripheral situations. Sam is seventeen, and has come home from boarding school for Christmas vacation when his parents decide he's had a bad cough for too long; what they discover is that he has a serious heart problem (cardiomyopathy) that is progressive, and that Sam's only hope for more than a few years of life is having a heart transplant. Sam's one of a big family, and there are innumerable financial and emotional problems involved for his parents, but they have marvelous support from family members and they have Sam's own courage to help them. Poole tells it all: the pain, the fear, the agonizing wait for a donor, the fear of failure through organ rejection, the lifetime of pills and possible infection ahead—all worth it because Sam lives. An absorbing book.

Rau, Margaret. *The Snow Monkey at Home*; illus. by Eva Hülsmann. Knopf, 1979. 78-31550. Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-83976-5; Library ed. ISBN 0-394-93976-X. 101p. Trade ed. \$6.95; Library ed. \$6.99 net.

R 6-9 Soft pencil drawings, realistically detailed and finely textured, illustrate a flowing and dignified text that goes through the life cycle of a male snow monkey, a Japanese macaque. Rau does not anthropomorphize, yet she establishes the monkey as a distinctive character while using his life to describe birth, child care, courtship and mating, communication, and the various and intricate patterns of individual relationships and group behavior within the monkey troop. An extensive divided bibliography is provided, as is an index.

Read, Mary Lyle. *The Ghost of Emma Louise*; illus. by Ingrid Koepcke. Abingdon. 1980. 79-1018. ISBN 0-687-14218-0. 128p. \$5.95.

M 3-5 There's always suspense when children hunt for buried treasure or a legal paper that will ensure treasure, but since the intricate search is directed by a ghost in whom none of the adults believe (save one), the searching done by Emma Louise and her friend Relee does not make a convincing story. The ghost of Emma Louise's great-great-grandmother, in a series of meetings, convinces Emma Louise and then her friend that her will had been destroyed years ago by the unscrupulous woman who succeeded her as the wife of Adam Atkins—his second wife and his murderer. There's a great deal of detective work, and the children, cheered on by great-great-grandmother, finally prove that Atkins (exhumed, with arsenic in his bones) had indeed been murdered and they find, just as the ghost had told them they would, that a hollowed leg of an antique desk has a copy of the will. Emma Louise's mother never believes in the ghost, nor do the police, nor does Relee's father (a lawyer) but Mother, a widow, is happy that a recovery of some of the money that had been usurped will come now to ease her life. The writing style is pedestrian, the plot far-fetched; the suspense will probably appeal to readers, however, and to some the ghost may be an added appeal.

Ruppert, Donna. *The Dragon's Path*; written and illus. by Donna Ruppert. Dawne-Leigh, 1979. 79-17169. Hardcover ed. ISBN 0-89742-023-3; Paper ed. ISBN 0-89742-014-4. 58p. Hardcover ed. \$8.95; Paper ed. \$5.95.

NR
4-5 Alexander and his grandfather live quietly and happily in their village in "an ancient shire." En route to help his great-aunt harvest her crop, Alexander strays from the forest path and into a village of indolent, ever-smiling people; he has been drawn by an irresistible aroma and music. He gets past a dragon guarding a "dark castle" (white in the crayon illustrations) and meets the wizard Cardew, who gives him pills that make him as indolent, forgetful, and happy as the villagers. Grandfather, after a time, unwraps his two golden swords, and rescues Alexander, and together they go to conquer the wizard and the dragon, both of whom turn out to have been victims of enchantment and are grateful; in turn the wizard releases the villagers from his pill-induced thrall. Everybody apparently lives happily ever after. No explanation of where Grandfather got the golden swords, or how he knew how to use them, or what the wizard's "bond with darkness" was. Written in mediocre style, amateurishly illustrated, this has a concocted air in its plotting.

Schuchman, Joan. *Two Places to Sleep*; illus. by Jim LaMarche. Carolrhoda Books, 1979. 79-88201. ISBN 0-87614-108-4. 32p. \$4.95.

R
K-2 So that seven-year-old David, who tells the story, could have the security of the same home and school, it had been decided, when his parents divorced, that he would stay with Dad, since Mom was moving to a city apartment to be near her job. Black and white softly shaded drawings (reminiscent of but not as skillful as Shimin's work) echo the emphasis of the story: both parents love David and want what's best for him. The text makes it clear that David is not unhappy with Dad, and that he likes their housekeeper; it's just that he misses Mom. She assures him that nothing he might do would bring about a reunion, that it's situation between the adults, and that she loves David just the way he is. A very supportive, rational treatment, nicely told at a comprehensible level, and making it clear that parental love—in this family—is rock-steady.

Selsam, Millicent Ellis. *A First Look at Sharks*; by Millicent E. Selsam and Joyce Hunt; illus. by Harriett Springer. Walker, 1979. 79-2200. Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-6372-3; Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-6373-1. 32p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.85 net.

R
2-3 Like other books in this series, this is designed to teach younger children precepts of classification as well as facts, and to encourage their acuity in observation. Although it uses some obvious devices (asking, on a page that carries two pictures of sharks' teeth, for example, "Which is which?" just below the text that explains which is which) it is clear, simply written, and nicely organized, with information limited to an absorbable amount, with clear and carefully placed illustrations, and with a summary of the anatomical features cited in the text that distinguish sharks from bony fish and that differentiate between one shark species and another.

Simon, Norma. *I'm Busy, Too*; illus. by Dora Leder. Whitman, 1980. 79-18374. ISBN 0-8075-3464-1. 32p. \$6.25.

Ad
3-5 yrs. Realistic pencil and crayon drawings in white, black, and orange illustrate an account of the busy day of the members of three families. Mikey is awakened by his mother, Sara by her sister, and Charlie by his father in a sort of split-screen format (used on some but not all pages) that is visually jarring. The text follows the three children to school, shows who their family members are and what they are busy doing while Sara, Mikey, and Charlie are busy in school. They all happily discuss

their day, and the children are all tucked into bed at the close of the book. "Happy dreams, all over town." While the text is heavily repetitive in use of language ("Children, teachers, teachers, children, busy, busy, working hard," or "Charlie's working in his school, Father's working in his shop, Everybody's busy, busy.") it does convey the idea that school and play are children's work, as well as the idea that the activities of every member of the family are important.

Smith, Jim. *Alphonse and the Stonehenge Mystery*; written and illus. by Jim Smith. Little, 1980. 79-89060. ISBN 0-316-80162-3. 32p. \$7.95.

Ad K-3 Razzle-dazzle heroics in the nonsense vein, this oversize book is illustrated with busy pictures that include some fine use of perspective and some amusing details. All of the characters are animals, clad as and behaving like human beings; Alphonse le Flic, detective, and reporter Mole McGrath discover that someone is stealing the stones of Stonehenge and replacing them with inflatable rubber imitations. Investigating, they learn who the culprits are and what method they are using, and a slam-bang chase ensues, which includes attacking a dirigible, crashing a light plane in the treetops, and catching the escaping criminals because the plane (which has been hanging in the treetops for some time) falls on the getaway car. Lots of action and exaggeration, plus the animal characters and the comic touches in the pictures, are the appealing elements in a frenzied story.

Thrasher, Crystal. *Between Dark and Daylight*. Atheneum, 1979. 79-12423. ISBN 0-689-50150-1. 251p. \$8.95.

R 5-7 Again, as in *The Dark Didn't Catch Me*, it is Seely, now twelve, who is the narrator. Seely's family is again on the move, her father hunting the employment that was so hard to find in the 1930's. When their truck breaks down, they move into an abandoned house and are befriended by the Meaders family; Seely is drawn to Johnny Meaders, a few years her senior. She quickly learns to avoid two other boys, the malicious and slightly retarded Fender twins whose avowed hatred of Johnny spreads to her because she and Johnny are friends. The story has a tragic death, as did its predecessor, for the twins kill Johnny; they are taken away by the authorities, but that is little comfort to those who mourn. Although somber, the book is so rich in characterization and so vivid in depicting life in rural Indiana during the depression years, that it is absorbing reading. Thrasher doesn't stoop to the invention of quaint characters or dialogue; the people are seen with compassionate insight, and their speech is richly flavorful rather than designedly homespun.

Townsend, John Rowe. *The Creatures*. Lippincott, 1980. 79-2405. Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-31864-2; Library ed. ISBN 0-397-31865-0. 256p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.79 net.

R 6-9 In an expertly crafted science fiction story, Townsend envisions a world of the future in which (after war has decimated the population of Earth) a small colony of superior beings lives under a protective dome. They are Persons, colonists from another planet; the natives are Creatures, uncouth menial workers controlled by the Guards. Two of the Persons, Harmony and Vector (all girls have musical names, all boys mathematical ones) fall in love, which simply isn't done, and they leave their community and escape to hide among the Creatures. In the uprising of the Guards and the counter-revolution of the Creatures, the young lovers are spared—but it isn't the plot that's important, although that is constructed with care and pace, but what the author has to say about an oppressed people and the bias against them, a bias Harmony and Vector lose as they live among the Creatures and come to realize that

they, too, are human beings, only beings who haven't had the advantages of the elite. Provocative as well as entertaining.

Trainer, David. *A Day in the Life of a TV News Reporter*; illus. with photographs by Stephen Sanacore. Troll, 1979. 78-68810. Hardcover ed. ISBN 0-89375-228-2; Paper ed. ISBN 0-89375-232-0. 32p. Hardcover ed. \$5.89 net; Paper ed. \$2.50.

M
3-5 Color photographs, uncaptioned but logically placed, add some variety to a static text that describes a (presumably typical) day in the life of Kristi Witker; neither the television station nor the city is identified. Witker is sent out to cover a story of a museum acquisition, then—by two-way radio—to film pictures of an aircraft carrier, and then to interview the director of a special ambulance fleet that had coped with a disaster two days before. The text ends with a description of the news program, and what goes on in the studio and the control room. Not an exciting account, and not particularly well written, but the subject should interest most children.

Truss, Jan. *Bird at the Window*. Harper, 1980. 79-1999. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026137-4; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026138-2. 215p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.79 net.

Ad
8-10 A top-ranking student in her high school graduating class, Angela goes from her Canadian home to England to visit her grandparents; only one person knows that she is pregnant. She is bored by the stolid, inarticulate neighbor who is the father of her child, and does not want to marry him. After an unpleasant visit with her nagging grandmother, and the chance discovery that her mother had migrated to Canada, pregnant, to marry her "father," Angela goes to London to live alone, has a stillborn child, and comes home to find her father dead and to confront her mother with the knowledge she's gained about her natural father. Unhappy, she agrees to marry the neighbor who'd fathered her child, but changes her mind, making that announcement at her wedding shower. At this point the book ends, with Angela's mother leaving for England and Angela deciding that she prefers freedom and can do what she always wanted: write. The writing is slow-moving, but the pace is alleviated by the perceptive characterization, the insight into relationships and motivation, and author's dramatic flair; the quality of the dialogue is variable.

Zindel, Bonnie. *A Star for the Latecomer*; by Bonnie Zindel and Paul Zindel. Harper, 1980. 79-1786. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026847-6; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026848-4. 185p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.89 net.

Ad
7-9 Brooke looks back to the year before, when she was sixteen, and remembers the long months of watching her mother's illness and death from bone cancer. In part this is an exploration of the mother-daughter relationship, a relationship in which Mom lovingly dominated Brooke's life, making plans for her, pushing her into a dancing career; in part, it is a story of adjustment to death. Brooke is a student at the school for young people in the performing arts, reluctantly going to auditions arranged by her optimistic mother; only with her mother's death does she realize that her mother had pushed her constantly into a pattern she didn't really want. As a story of adjustment to death, this is often touching, and as a story of a stage mother it is occasionally scathing, but it is weakened by the verbose and not infrequently pretentious writing style. For example, two months after Brooke's mother has told her family of the diagnosis, Brooke muses, "I recalled telling Brandon . . . that my favorite time of day was twilight. Ironical as it may seem, at this very moment I felt that my mother was facing the twilight of her life."

READING FOR TEACHERS

To order any of the items listed below, please write directly to the publisher of the item, not to the BULLETIN of the Center for Children's Books.

Gough, Pauline. "Introducing Children to Books via Television." *The Reading Teacher*, January, 1979.

Hoskisson, Kenneth. "A Response to 'A Critique of Teaching Reading as a Whole-Task Venture.'" *The Reading Teacher*, March, 1979.

Moss, Joy. "The Fable and Critical Thinking." *Language Arts*, January, 1980.

Schwartz, Judy. "Implications of Early Linguistic and Cognitive Development for Teaching Reading." *Language Arts*, September, 1979.

Sharman, George. "Storytelling and the Schools." *English Journal*, May, 1979.

Smith, Carol and Elliott, Peggy. *Reading Activities for Middle and Secondary Schools*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1979. 224p. paper. \$6.95.

Stanchfield, Jo and Fraim, Susan. "A Follow-Up Study on the Reading Interests of Boys." *Journal of Reading*, May, 1979.

Strenski, Ellen. "Put a Little Mystery in Your Course." *Media & Methods*, March, 1978.

Swain, Emma. "Using Comic Books to Teach Reading and Language Arts." *Journal of Reading*, December, 1978.

Turner, Darwin. "Teaching Contemporary Literature." *English Journal*, September, 1979.

Tway, Eileen. "The Gifted Child in Literature." *Language Arts*, January, 1980.

Wilner, Isabel. "Making Poetry Happen: Birth of a Poetry Troupe." *Children's Literature in Education*, Summer, 1979.

Awards

Myra Cohn Livingston is the recipient of the 1980 Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children, an award given annually by the National Council of Teachers of English.

Ouida Sebestyen is the recipient of the 1980 award given by the International Reading Association to an author who shows unusual promise in the children's book field. Ms. Sebestyen's book is *Words by Heart*, published by Atlantic/Little, Brown.

